

the lead of so-called Independent Counsel Ken Starr, and utterly failed to develop any facts of its own that would bear on the allegations. The Committee made a mockery of the responsibilities that come with consideration of impeachment and debased the Constitutional criteria by which impeachment is justified.

From the outset, I opposed the process pursued by the Committee. As members of the Committee noted, the majority proceeded from allegations to a conclusion, ignoring fact-finding or rational inquiry. In short, the process was unfair. By denying the House the opportunity to vote on censure, and by introducing raw partisanship into a vote of conscience, the majority has compounded that unfairness. Attempts to inflict the maximum amount of pain on the President by insisting on impeachment—the ultimate “scarlet letter” as Mr. McCOLLUM put it—risks putting this country through an experience it need not endure. In view of the strong reasons not to impeach, and the strong public sentiments against such action, the partisan march toward impeachment is truly regretful.

#### HINDU NATIONALISTS DESTROY CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN “SEC- ULAR” INDIA

#### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I was disturbed by recent reports that several Christian churches, prayer halls, and religious missions have recently been destroyed by Hindu extremists affiliated with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), a militant Hindu organization. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the party that leads the governing coalition, is also part of the VHP.

The violence forced many Christian congregations to cancel New Year's celebrations for fear of offending the Hindu militants, which could lead to further violence. Is this the secularism that India boasts about? Clearly, there is no religious freedom for these Christians in India.

Unfortunately, these are just the latest incidents of violence against Christians in India. Four nuns were raped last year by a Hindu gang. The VHP described the rapists as “patriotic youth” and called the nuns “antinational elements.” To be Christian in secular India is to be an antinational element! At least three priests were killed in 1997 and 1998, and in 1997 police opened fire on a Christian festival that was promoting the theme “Jesus is the Answer.”

Apparently, the Hindu Nationalists are afraid that the Dalits, or “Untouchables”, the aboriginal people of South Asia who are at the bottom of the caste structure, are switching to other religions, primarily Christianity, thus improving their status. This undermines the caste structure which is the foundation of the Hindu social structure.

The Indian government has killed more than 200,000 Christians since 1947 and the Christians of Nagaland, in the eastern part of India, are involved in one of 17 freedom movements

within India's borders. But the Christians are not the only ones oppressed for their religion.

India has murdered more than 250,000 Sikhs since 1984 and over 60,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988, as well as many thousands of other people. The holiest shrine in the Sikh religion, the Golden Temple in Amritsar, is still under occupation by plainclothes police, some 14 years after India's brutal military attack on the Golden Temple. The previous Jathedar of the Akal Takht, Gurdev Singh Kaunke, was killed in police custody by being torn in half. The police disposed of his body. He had been tortured before the Indian government decided to kill him.

The Babri mosque, the most sacred Muslim shrine in the state of Uttar Pradesh, was destroyed by the Hindu militants who advocate building a Hindu temple on the site. Yet India proudly boasts that it is a religiously tolerant, secular democracy.

This kind of religious oppression does not deserve American support. We should take tough measures to ensure that India learns to respect basic human rights. All U.S. aid to India should be cut off and we should openly declare U.S. support for self-determination for all the peoples of the subcontinent. By these measures we can help bring religious freedom and basic human rights to Christians, Sikhs, Muslims, and everyone else in South Asia.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce Press reports on the attacks on Christian religious institutions into the RECORD.

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 3, 1999]

#### HINDUS BLAMED FOR ATTACKS ON CHRISTIANS

NEW DELHI.—India's main opposition Congress party said a wave of attacks on Christians appeared to be a campaign by Hindu right-wing groups to whip up conflict.

Police detained 45 Hindus Friday in connection with torching a Catholic prayer hall by mobs Wednesday. Four nuns and two priests were injured in the 10th reported attack against Christians since Christmas.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks in the western state of Gujarat, but Congress and Christian activists blame Hindu right-wing activists, including the Vishwa Hindu Parishad—World Hindu Council—and its affiliate, Bajrang Dal. Christians make up 2.3 percent of the 960 million people in politically secular India. More than 80 percent of the population are Hindus.

[From the Washington Post, Dec. 31, 1998]

#### INDIAN CHRISTIANS CANCEL NEW YEAR SERVICES

MULCHAND, INDIA.—Christian congregations in western India are canceling New Year prayer services this year, fearful of provoking more violence from radical Hindus who already have destroyed a dozen churches. The violence has put the governing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the awkward position of needing to protect India's Christian minority from groups affiliated with the Hindu nationalist party. Since Friday, mobs armed with axes, iron bars, hammers and stones have attacked 18 churches, prayer halls or Christian schools.

#### GENETIC INFORMATION NON- DISCRIMINATION IN HEALTH IN- SURANCE ACT OF 1999

#### HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to introduce today H.R. 306, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination in Health Insurance Act of 1999.

Over the past few years, genetic discoveries have proceeded at a pace undreamt of less than a decade ago. Genes have been identified that are linked to common disorders like colon cancer, heart disease, and breast cancer. Doctors and researchers are moving rapidly to develop gene therapies and specialized drugs that attack only cells carrying damaged DNA.

A tiny sample of blood, tissue, or hair can now reveal the most intimate secrets of an individual's present and future health. While this information holds tremendous promise for curing disease and alleviating human suffering, it also carries an equal potential for abuse.

As a result, I am reintroducing the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination in Health Insurance Act. This vital legislation would prevent health insurers from denying, canceling, refusing to renew, or changing the terms, premiums, or conditions of coverage on the basis of genetic information. It would prohibit insurance companies from requesting or requiring that a person reveal genetic information. Finally, it would protect the privacy of genetic information by requiring that an insurer obtain prior, written consent from an individual before revealing his or her genetic information to a third party.

Since it was first introduced in 1995, support for my legislation has grown steadily. At the end of the 105th Congress, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination in Health Insurance Act had 210 bipartisan cosponsors in the House and 25 in the Senate. It had also gained the endorsement of over 125 health-related organizations, ranging from advocacy groups like the National Breast Cancer Coalition and the March of Dimes to health professional organizations like the American Medical Association and the American Nurses Association. Religious organizations, health information managers, and consumer protection groups joined the fight.

In May 1998, the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee under Chairman JIM JEFFORDS held a groundbreaking hearing on genetic discrimination in health insurance. Unfortunately, efforts to move this legislation to the Senate floor became bogged down in the debate over managed care reform. Nevertheless, genetic nondiscrimination language was included in some versions of managed care reform legislation—an important step toward recognizing the urgent need to ban genetic discrimination in health insurance.

Mr. Speaker, I am very hopeful that 1999 will be the year when Congress finally fulfills its duty to ensure that our nation's social policy keeps pace with scientific advances. Today, too many Americans are denying themselves access to information vital to their